

PROPERTY TAXES

Last November the governor called a special session to reinstate a limit on the local property tax portion of your property taxes. At that time, many said that the special session was a look into one of the priorities for the 2008 session. However, we failed to see any meaningful property tax legislation pass the Legislature this session. We believe true tax relief will be achieved by reducing taxes, not by adding to homeowners' tax burden.

OTHER ISSUES

Anaphylaxis

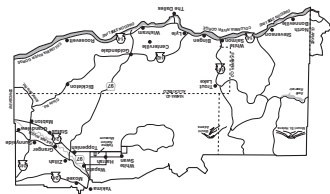
Severe allergic reactions, such as reactions to peanuts or bee stings, can be deadly if immediate help is not available. Children spend a majority of their time at school, and the state has a special obligation to make certain that school staff members are adequately trained to respond to emergencies. The Legislature passed a bill, sponsored by Sen. Honeyford, which requires schools to have a plan in place by Sept. 2009 to deal with the serious issue of anaphylaxis. The governor signed the bill into law March 26. We have no doubt that this legislation will one day save a life.

Honey beekeepers

Honeybees are a crucial part of any flowering crop to ensure stable, high-quality production. We're seeing a national trend in the decline of bee populations. The cost of feeding bees has become very expensive because there are fewer areas for them to forage. Senate Bill 6468, co-sponsored by Sen. Honeyford with the House version sponsored by Rep. Chandler, would create a much needed tax exemption for honey beekeepers. The bill passed the Legislature almost unanimously and was signed into Law. It would allow honey bee products and pollination services to be exempt from the business and occupation (B&O) tax. It would also exempt sales tax on the sale of honey bees. The rest of the agricultural industry is exempt from the B&O tax so this seems only fair. We were all proud to support this measure to help beekeepers be more successful in our state.



Rep. Chandler on the House floor.



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UPDATE

2008 Post Session Update to the 15th Legislative District



What the Legislature is
doing about issues
important to you!

- INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
- Gang & other public safety legislation
 - State spending
 - Using tax dollars to fund political campaigns

Spring 2008

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2008 legislative session adjourned March 13 and we are happy to be home in our community with family and friends. During our time in Olympia, the Senate and House passed a marathon 335 bills.

Our priorities this session included improving public safety, addressing water storage issues and finding ways in which to stimulate economic growth in communities throughout the state. We are proud of the work done to address these issues. As you may know, an anti-gang bill passed the Legislature with only five descending votes this year. We worked for a long time to help other legislators in Olympia understand how prevalent gangs are in our area, and how important it is for the state to address this crisis. This year’s legislation made significant progress.

During the interim, we will continue to follow water issues including the Yakima Basin Storage Study, the Columbia Basin Water Management Plan and water system improvements in White Salmon and Underwood.

On another note, the House this year honored former 15th district legislator Lyle Dickie who recently passed away. Lyle was a man of character and integrity, as well as a teacher to many. We will miss his friendship.

As always, we welcome your concerns and questions. Hearing from you helps us to better represent you. It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

Sen. Jim Honeyford

Rep. Bruce Chandler

Rep. Dan Newhouse



Sen. Jim Honeyford



Rep. Bruce Chandler



Rep. Dan Newhouse
Republican Floor Leader

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- Committees:**
- Consumer Protection and Housing,
Ranking Republican
 - Water, Energy and Telecommunications,
Ranking Republican
 - Ways and Means

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- Committees:**
- Appropriations
 - Appropriations Subcommittee on General
Government and Audit Review
 - Commerce and Labor
 - State Government and Tribal Affairs,
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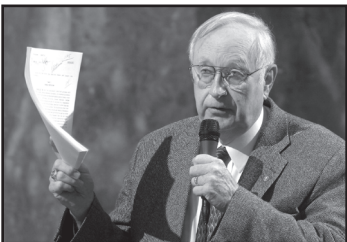
- Committees:**
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
 - Capital Budget
 - Rules
 - Select Committee on Environmental Health

PUBLIC SAFETY

We are pleased that the anti-gang bill passed the Legislature this year. \$1.2 million was appropriated in the final supplemental budget to go toward law enforcement resources, graffiti removal programs and victim witness relocation.

While it may not be everything we hoped for, it’s a great start to an urgent problem in our communities. The anti-gang legislation will do several things to combat gangs. House Bill 2712:

- creates state definitions for gangs, gang members and gang crimes.
- creates a statewide gang database to help law enforcement officials share information,
- increases sentencing for adults who recruit juveniles to commit gang crimes,
- provides money to aid local jurisdictions with graffiti removal and
- provides funding for increased law enforcement resources.

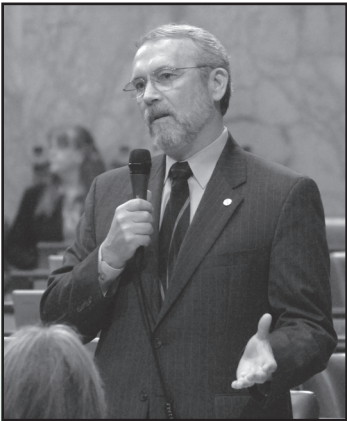


Sen. Honeyford speaks on the floor of the Senate.

Sen. Honeyford sat on the gang task force which was created by legislation initially sponsored by Rep. Newhouse in 2007. The task force drafted recommendations that use suppression, intervention and prevention to address gangs. While we are disappointed the final bill did not include every aspect of this comprehensive approach, we still believe it’s a good foundation from which to build. We will continue working to convince others of the usefulness and safeguards of civil anti-gang injunctions and will be back next year fighting for additional funding for prevention and intervention strategies.

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET AND STATE SPENDING PRIORITIES

Despite the warnings of decreased revenues by the governor’s budget office and the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council, we continued to see overspending this year. We are fortunate that the economy in Yakima, Skamania and Klickitat Counties is going strong with a flourishing farming industry, but we should be careful with our spending habits. Just as we teach children not to pile up credit card debt, the state should set an example by spending within its means and saving for tougher years in the future.



Rep. Newhouse speaks on the floor of the House.

Our priorities have always been education, public safety and transportation. These priorities are also written in our state’s Constitution as the responsibility of the Legislature. We believe in creating a budget that prioritizes these issues.

We fought for an education budget that benefits students, a public safety budget that puts families before felons, and a transportation budget that keeps promises by making roads safer and less congested.

TAXES

Sen. Lisa Brown, D-Spokane, recently attacked the budget process by filing a legal challenge to overturn Initiative 960. The measure requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to raise taxes. Voters approved this initiative just last fall. It reaffirms the higher vote threshold for tax increases that was previously mandated by Initiative 601. The people voted for these measures overwhelmingly because they believe that it should be more difficult for the state to

raise their taxes without restraint. We agree with the voters, and believe that it is the role of elected officials to listen to the will of the people.

Our fear is that this lawsuit will set up the government for major tax increases next year. Families already face a serious tax burden. We will continue to fight to keep your taxes under control, so you can keep more of your hard-earned money.

PUBLIC FUNDING OF CAMPAIGNS

This year several pieces of legislation came before us that would use taxpayer dollars to fund political campaigns. We believe the first test of our success in the Legislature is convincing folks to willingly contribute financially to our campaigns. Rep. Chandler fought vehemently against all the measures in the State Government committee he sits on as ranking member. Two of the three measures died in the committee, but there was one bill that did pass the Legislature. We voted no because it will allow local government funding to be diverted to political campaigns. How you spend your money is another form of free speech – allowing it to be sent to candidates you don’t support is not right. We fought hard to oppose this measure

(Senate Bill 5278) which was signed into law by the governor.